

MINUTES

RANDOLPH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

July 23, 2001

There was a special joint meeting held at 6:30 p.m., on Monday, July 23, 2001, of the Randolph County Planning Board and the Randolph County Board of Commissioners in the Auditorium of the Learning Resources Center at Randolph Community College, Asheboro, North Carolina.

1. **Commissioner Chairman Phil Kemp** and **Planning Board Chairman Maxton McDowell** called the meeting to Order at 6:30 p.m.
2. The following Planning Board members were present: Maxton McDowell, Chairman; Bill Dorsett, Vice Chairman; Lynden Craven; Phil Ridge; Larry Brown and Mark Brower (Al Morton was absent). The following Commissioners were present: Phil Kemp, Chairman; Darryl Frye, Vice Chairman; Harold Holmes; Robbie Davis; and Robbie Mason.
3. **Hal Johnson**, Planning Director, gave a brief summary of the proposed Growth Management Plan and the proposed Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance:

Johnson said that the proposed Growth Management Plan is an attempt to respond to the tremendous growth that Randolph County has experienced in the past 15 years. Johnson said that since 1995, over 6825 citizens have attended meetings of the Randolph County Planning Board. These citizens were there as a result of land use changes planned for their neighborhoods. Johnson said the proposed Plan and zoning amendments are those issues repeatedly expressed by Randolph County citizens attending those Planning Board meetings.

Johnson said that because of the large amount of rezoning requests, and the sometimes emotional manner of well attended public hearings, the growth management process sometimes seems to be based just on whatever issue happens to be scheduled that meeting.

Johnson said that without a clear plan for growth, citizens who participate in a rezoning hearing often come away from the meeting feeling like they have lost. Johnson described what he observes at most county Public Hearings:

- At the public hearing, a developer or property owner usually asks for the most profitable and intense use of the land.
- The neighbors respond at the public hearing that whatever change is allowed on the vacant property will alter or destroy their neighborhood and quality of life.
- The rest of the public hearings is usually spent with both sides in the rezoning dispute arguing about how unreasonable the other side is.

It is always clear in situations like this that, regardless of how the vote by the Planning Board or the County Commissioners goes, everyone has already lost.

And the biggest loser in this process, is the County of Randolph, because we do not have a long range plan with workable policies.

So we try to make a growth plan that offers more opportunities to reach consensus. We try to design a Growth Plan that will allow opportunities for all parties to be heard and participate, but also not lose sight of the primary focus which is the total County interest of sustainable development

AND FINALLY, we tried to design policies that get the County, the developer, and the neighborhood together earlier, so that potential areas of disagreement and misunderstanding can be identified and addressed.

Johnson presented a map of Randolph County that showed the growth trends in each area.

Summary of Growth Management Plan:

Growth Corridors

- *Primary Growth Areas
- *Secondary Growth Areas
- *Rural Conservation Areas
- *Municipal Growth Areas

Interconnected Development Policies

Flexible Rural Subdivision Options

- *Enhance Groundwater Recharge Areas
- *Reduce Erosion and Stormwater Run-off into Streams and Adjoining Properties

Development Impact Analysis

Agri-Business Preservation/Voluntary Agricultural District

Johnson presented a map of the proposed Growth Management Areas and described each area.

Summary of Proposed Zoning Amendments:

Major Residential Subdivision Overlay Districts

- *Conventional
- *Rural Residential (Large lot)
- *Conservation (50% open space)

Development Impact Analysis

- *Public Education
- *Water Resources
- *Traffic Analysis
- *Area Housing Characteristics

Neighborhood Information Meeting

- *Community Input
- *Technical Review
- *Formal Staff Recommendation

Specialized Commercial/Rural Industrial Overlay Districts

- *Industrial Overlay
- *Rural Business

Scenic Corridor Overlay District

Subdivisions Buffers and Screens

Private Roads (Roads not built to NCDOT specifications)

- *Maximum Length 1320 Feet
- *Maximum number of lots is 6
- *All Private Roads must connect to public roads
- *Industrial driveways and Unified Developments are exempt

Special Use Permit Revisions

- *Planned Unit Development
- *Planned Rural Development

1. **Chairman Kemp** thanked Johnson for his presentation and opened the Public Hearing for public comments. Kemp informed the audience that the Board would not be making a decision at this meeting tonight and this decision could be made in the next 2 to 3 months.

Robert Bean said that this plan is too complex for him to understand. Bean asked what other counties have this kind of plan throughout the State. **Johnson** answered he wasn't aware of any. **Beans** said this would hurt the acreage owners of this county. **Johnson** said that this actually provides options to the acreage owners of the County. **Bean** asked if any of the acreage owners help design this plan. **Johnson** said that we've had a lot of input over the years from many community meetings. Johnson said that we've tried to reach out to as many people as we can to develop this plan. **Beans** said he didn't understand why a 50 page document was needed to control growth and he was frightened that this would be just another environmental program. Bean said that he felt the average acreage land owner was going to be hung. Bean said that this is their 401k and this could just about ruin them. **Kemp** explained that those that have these large tracts of land have very few options for their lands at this time. Kemp said that this is in an effort to give people options of what they can do and not tie them to a certain plan. **Bean** questioned about the 35' buffer that could cause problems with falling trees because of weather (ice/snow storms).

Mark Comfort, Bull Run Creek Area, said that they are very much in support of the Rural Conservation Area that is proposed for their community. Comfort said that this proposed plan offers structure and positives for everyone. This does represent a well thought out compromise for Randolph County. Comfort said it also protects farmers who are a vital part of the County and the State. Comfort thanked Johnson, his staff, the Commissioners and the Planning Board for their work on this plan.

Clarence Reynolds, Providence Church Road, discussed the excessive growth in their area. Reynolds said he would like to see the Rural Conservation Area moved from Wayne White Road to Racine Road. Reynolds discussed the restrictions on his property for hunting and farming due to the developments in the area. Reynolds said he felt a larger buffer zone should be in place instead of just 35 feet.

Robert Reynolds, Providence Church Road, said that he lives on family farm (since 1851) and said he would like to see it in the Rural Conservation Area rather than the secondary growth area to protect their farms. Reynolds asked about the maintenance of the subdivision signs and said he felt someone should be required to maintain them for years down the road.

Hazel Kimrey, Sandy Creek Church Road, said that we are only stewards to this earth intrusted to us by God. Kimrey said that when farms are cut into small lots with no future thoughts of water and sewer, we will no longer be good stewards. Kimrey described the chicken houses, hog parlors, cattle farms, horse farms, and other farms in this area. Kimrey requested that their area be designated as Rural Conservation instead of Secondary Growth. Kimrey asked each Board to drive down to their community to see how much farm land this is and asked to please leave the County with clean air, water, and food. Kimrey asked that these developers be stopped from coming into Randolph County and asked for the land, wildlife, be left as they area.

Rodney Moody, Randleman, Asheboro/Randolph Board of Realtors President, said the economy should be the back bone of any growth management plan. Moody said our economy spurs growth, however he has a lot of faith in our community. Moody said there are sweeping changes in this plan and he felt that each property owner should be given the full use of their land (whether it be selling the timber or lots). Moody said he felt we could find someway to find a compromise and said that the 4 acre lot requirements is larger than in any other County in the State. Moody said that Orange County wished they had put together a USGS Water Quality Plan and the recharge rates before implementing their growth plan. Moody said the County has varied soil qualities and they need to be considered in creating Primary Growth Areas. Moody said he would like to see an inventory of the Natural Heritage Assets for Randolph County.

Corbin Moffitt, Buffalo Ford Road, said he felt there was good testimony on each side. Moffitt said he is a rural county person. Moffitt said that over the years there have been subdivisions put on farmlands throughout the area. Moffitt said for a long time he thought this was bad thing, but we need to be careful what government does on the private ownership of land. Moffitt asked did everyone want someone to tell you what you want to do on your property. Moffitt said that simple breaking up of the land to house people is not bad. Moffitt expressed concern for the elderly that may need to sell their land in order to survive. Moffitt said that large tracts of land are handed down to family members and these decisions could effect several people. Moffitt said he felt there should be a scientific process to determine lot sizes not just a gut feeling. Moffitt said that the USGS Survey would show what our water table can stand and until we do this study we won't know. Moffitt said that the rural community is being asked to provide entertainment to other parts of the County. Moffitt said he felt there should be some soul searching and he felt there should be a couple of more meetings so that everyone can be here when making decisions like this.

Bill Boyd, Asheboro, said that his major concern was this Rural Conservation Area that appears to be over 50% of the County. Boyd said that people that work in the factories have to have places to live. Boyd said we need to think about the fact that a lot of the Secondary Area will not work for septic tanks and this will limit the amount of develop able area. Boyd said that if we don't have affordable housing you won't have industry. Boyd said this will limit the ability to provide affordable housing. Boyd said he felt this was a complicated document and difficult to understand. Boyd said if your tax bills goes up by twice next time you may feel that growth is positive. Boyd said he is for zoning and a growth management plan but he didn't feel this stringent of a plan is necessary in Randolph County.

Kathy Kivett said that her grandmother owns a large tract of land and she is concerned how the land would be divided after her grandmother passes away. Kivett said she felt there should be more education to the public about this process.

Glenda Moffitt, Buffalo Ford Road, said when she first read the document she was concerned that this document doesn't recognize private property rights. Moffitt said that the plan should recognize private property rights. Moffitt said she called 41 families to tell them about this document and they didn't

know about this document. Moffitt said the document she read didn't sound like what Johnson said when he spoke at the beginning of this meeting. Moffitt they've just moved back into the County after being gone for 20 years. Moffitt said industry is moving out of this County and asked the Board if they were working on a plan to solve this problem. Moffitt said that she realizes there has been a Heritage Task Force appointed but none of these members are seeking to protect land they own. Moffitt said that there are people in this County that would like to be involved in Growth Plans for our property. Moffitt said people in the County should be able to write their own plans. Moffitt asked if there was anyone present that would like to work on a growth plan for the County to raise their hands, and several citizens raised their hands. Moffitt asked if there were people present that didn't understand the plan and about half the room stood.

Terry Moffitt, Buffalo Ford Road, said that the word of God reveals to us that God protects property owned by families. Moffitt said that God looks after families and the property in which they live. Moffitt said that he didn't allow government to meddle with these properties. Moffitt discussed percentages from the plan that he felt lacked balance. Moffitt talked about the term sprawl and said that this is free market and freedom to decide where people live. Moffitt said it isn't government's business where people live. Moffitt said we aren't under intense economic development pressures but we are under intense economic tax pressures. Moffitt said that there is a need for some people to sell off small portions of property every couple of years. Moffitt said that this plan will wreck that method for the elderly to be able to pay to live. Moffitt said that this document suggests the heavy hand of government regulations and will seriously reduce what we can do with our property all for the word "protection". Moffitt discussed Scenic Corridors as being for those that live in the City to enjoy and restrict those that actually own the property. Moffitt said the document needs to be more favorably representing those that own the large tracts of land in Randolph County.

Bonnie Renfrow, Westbury Drive, President of REDC, spoke in support of implementing the Industrial Overlay Districts in Rural Areas of Randolph County. Renfrow said this will give the County a tool where the needs of an industry would need to be located outside of the Primary Growth Areas. Renfrow said she appreciated this inclusion and thanked the Board of considering this.

Linda Hill, Hoover Hill Road, said she felt this was a very good start but she wasn't sure that this would be a final document. Hill said that over the years she has always had a good professional relationship with the County Planning Director and felt he should be commended for his work.

Ray Voncannon said he owns a large tract of land and has concerns with how this will effect his land. Voncannon said that from this to the taxation, he is told what it is worth and then he is told what he can do with it. Voncannon said he wants to be able to use it as he sees fit. Voncannon said he felt this would possibly hamper him in the future and we are also placing undue burdens on our children in the future. Voncannon said he felt this would make it tougher for large land owners to use their property later on.

Marleen Sanford, Kensington Road, (Guildford County) said she was raised in Randolph County and her family asked her to look at this plan because she has served on citizen committees that developed 6 different comprehensive growth plans. Sanford discussed Orange, Forsyth, Guilford, etc. Sanford said that the large lots approved in rural Orange County is 2 acres. Sanford said that the current policies are already redirecting the growth (she quoted the plan and tax data base). Sanford said that land development is the most heavily regulated in the country. Sanford said that sprawl is does not contribute to the traffic congestion. Sanford said that Randolph County is the 6th largest agricultural county in the State but only employ 1% of the population. Sanford said the Board should allow less open space requirements and allow for incentives to preserve more. Sanford said a study by USGS for lot size needs, but this cost would be received by the consumer along with bricks, etc.

George Bain, Bachelor Creek Road, said that he and his wife own approximately 230 acres and he is 70 years old. Bain said that one day he will have to sell and he is concerned with what he will do with the farm when he can no longer develop it. Bain said he land would be worth as much to somebody as a whole as it would be to dividing it. Bain said that we get fewer and fewer farms and taxes go up and pretty soon the elderly can't afford to pay the taxes. Bain said we need to be diligent with the Commissioners we elect because they are the ones to determine the tax we pay. Bain said he came to the Commissioners when high density proposed subdivisions came to the Board. Bain said he didn't want to see increase in noise, traffic, light, and all the things that can happen when land is developed. Bain said Randolph County is going to grow, we can't stop that. Bain said he didn't feel a minimum 4 acre lot size would devalue large tracts of property. Bain said he is a geologist and discussed the Guilford County water study. Bain said he knows the geology of this County and surrounding counties and that this County's geology is different than most of the surrounding counties. Bain said he would think that a scientific study would be appropriate to determine lot sizes in the County.

Leslie Thompson, Soapstone Mountain Road, Staley, said that Judith Hohn asked her to speak. Thompson said that the creation of all these lots being cut up effect an area tremendously. Thompson said that their average lot size is 5+ acres. Thompson said that she is voicing her support and Hohn's support for this plan and asked that their entire area be considered Rural Conservation. Thompson said that this would allow them protection and would manage the growth. Thompson asked that their area be included in the Rural Conservation Area and not the Secondary Growth Area. Thompson said that they are not sure that this is tight enough and their community is in full support of it.

Phyllis East, Hillsville Road, said she was glad to see this plan because of the problems they have had with water run-off. East said she would like to ask the Board what they should do with the established areas and the run-off problems they are experience. East said she would like to see some strict regulations on run-off and erosion control. East presented pictures of the problems they are experiencing on their property.

Roger King, Jackson Creek Road, said that he has spoken out for a need for a growth plan for their area in previous Board Hearings. King discussed really problems of real mismanagement of development. King said that he realized that this plan was no small task. King said he realized that this plan will not satisfy everyone completely. King said however he did feel that it answers so many problems their community is experiencing (schools, run-off, traffic, etc.) King said he felt this is a good start in the right direction and he urged the Board to approve it as soon as possible.

Aweilda Williams, Back Creek Road, said that if we stop growth your children will have to go somewhere else to live and your taxes will only go higher and higher. Williams discussed the stiff regulations that she has to deal with when trying to locate families in this County. Williams talked about watershed regulations, subdivision regulations, government land, and traffic patterns, that already restriction development. Williams said that ultimately the land owner should have the right to choose what is to be done with their land. Williams said we should be careful with the encroachment of our property rights.

Connie Pittman, Tree Hollow Road, said she lives in a subdivision but she feels a property owners should have the right to say what they do with their land. Pittman said she felt the cost of a road and the cost the development land is already astronomical. Pittman said this will make home ownership completely out of reach for our children and most certain for our grandchildren. Pittman said the one that pays the taxes should be able to determine what they do with their land.

John Whitt, Whitt Hunt Road, said he didn't know what the proposal says but as he understands it there will be a 4 acre minimum lot size up from 40,000 sq. ft. in their community. Whitt said that this is one heck of a jump and what is the term affordable mean. Whitt said that there is a working class in this County and not an aristocrat class in this County. Whitt talked about young couples starting out and the burdens this would place on them. Whitt talked about the limiting of large property owners as to what they can do with their property. Whitt talked about a 2 acre minimum lot size in Pleasant Garden and after an intense amount of opposition they lowered it back to 40,000 sq. ft. Whitt asked how the Board can dictate to them how their land can be developed. Kemp explained that the 4 acre minimum does not apply to every piece of land in the County. Kemp advised Whitt to stop by the Planning Department and pick up a copy of the document.

2. **Chairman Kemp** said that the only way of communication is through the local papers and the papers have covered this issue fairly well. Kemp advised the public that they can call the Planning Department to learn of the process that has been in progress for the last 18 months. Kemp said that they will take into consideration the comments that have been made.
3. **Chairman McDowell** said that there are some misconceptions out there and advised the public to get a copy of the document before they make up their minds of what the document says.
4. **Frye** said he was on this Board when the County implemented countywide zoning in 1987. Frye said he shared a lot of the same beliefs as many in this room. Frye told a story of a friend that was planning to build a new home after working all their lives. Frye said he was told that he wouldn't build his home in Randolph County because the County couldn't ensure him that his life savings would be protected. Frye said this is not for the Board to control but to help protect and preserve the values of what you have. Frye said this is not etched in stone and they've made several notes and they will take this into consideration.
5. **Chairman Kemp** thanked everyone for attending tonight and said they are trying to work out something to help the future growth of Randolph County. Kemp adjourned the meeting at 8:48 p.m. There were approximately 180 people present for this meeting.

**NORTH CAROLINA
RANDOLPH COUNTY**

Planning Director

Date

Clerk/Secretary